MONTEREY NEWS

May 2006
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The Town

2007 Town Budget

With the annual Town Meeting approaching rapidly, the 2006–2007 fiscal year budget consumed a great deal of Select Board attention at its April meetings.

Leroy Thorpe, chairman of the Park Commission, disputed dividing the park budget into two items—lawn maintenance and parks—saying that such a division removes the commission's flexibility. Sylbert explained that the Select Board is considering a fourth employee for the Highway Department, and that mowing town-owned lawns would be part of the job description. Thorpe said that mowing contracts are for three years, while Sylbert explained that the town cannot appropriate funds for more than one year. Moreover, said Sylbert, such contracts must be line items.

During the April 10th meeting, when the final version of the Town Meeting Warrant was almost ready for signatures, Select Board member Jon Sylbert surprised everyone by proposing a "level spending" option, that is, budgeting each item for what it was last year.

Sylbert apologized for his last-minute proposal, explaining that he believes the excess levy capacity ballot question on the Town Meeting Warrant is more important

Franny Huberman

The Monterey Library children's book group. Back row (l to r): Morwenna, Jonah, Ana, Kyle, Cavanaugh. Middle row: Maura, Sophie, Emma, Eloisa. Front row: Alyssa, Gabriella. Not pictured: Joe. *(See story p. 19.)*

than budget increases this year. The ballot question asks if the town should be allowed to assess an additional $300,000 in real estate and personal property taxes for the purpose of general operating expenses for the next fiscal year. Sylbert posited that it is unwise to ask voters to approve the override while presenting a budget that is $200,000 over last year's. He recommended that with a level spending approach, department heads would still be free to press their case for increases in salaries and supplies at Town Meeting.

Outgoing Select Board chair Michele Miller countered that the Select Board must take responsibility for presenting a realistic operating budget. "We want an honest budget," she said, one that differentiates, for example, supplies for winter road maintenance from salaries and overtime in the Highway Department. Members of the Finance Committee strongly believe it is time for the town to present a realistic budget, one that includes what can reasonably be expected for winter maintenance and other "emergency" expenses.

Sylbert's proposal was defeated, and the warrant, including the budget prepared by the Finance Committee, was signed and sent to the printer.

Highway Department

Director of Operations Maynard Forbes told the Select Board that as of July 1, a state regulation goes into effect on all solid waste, such as building materials, requiring the separation of sheet rock and wood for recycling. In light of this state-mandated change, a representative of the Master Garbologist met with Forbes to propose physical changes at the transfer station so that his company could use the Monterey transfer station to store containers of these materials from other towns before they go to a recycling plant near Boston. After a discussion about the amount of traffic such a plan would generate, the Select Board evinced displeasure with the Garbologist's proposal.

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In discussions about the 2006 – 2007 budget for the Highway Department, Sylbert pointed out that winter maintenance has increased substantially since 2002 because of the adoption of the "black road" policy. This effort to keep Monterey roads as clear as possible during the winter has increased the total cost of salt and sand from $55,000 in 2002 to $140,000 in 2005.

Article 11 on the Town Meeting Warrant requests the transfer of $76,00 from the Stabilization Fund to purchase a new 18,000-lb. truck, plow, and equipment, and Article 112 requests permission for the Select Board to trade in or sell the 2000 Ford 550 truck. Forbes was asked to put the Bally Gally maintenance costs as a line item in the budget. He was also asked to remove $1500 from his budget for tree planting since the Tree Warden's budget is slated for an increase.

Discussion of a proposed fourth Highway Department employee continues to crop up. Once again Forbes raised the issue of what department or commission oversees mowing, for without a significant mowing component in the job description the position is not economically feasible. Forbes reported that in other southern Berkshire towns mowing is done by one person.

In response to a question from Sylbert about how many hours the Highway Department spends plowing in the winter, Forbes said that it takes 9–12 man-hours to make a full sweep of town during a snowstorm.

Projects coming up for the Highway Department include replacing the bridge on River Road and refinishing Sandisfield Road. Forbes reported that the Highway Department is smoothing out the bumpier spots on dirt roads and building up washouts from the winter.

Forbes told the Select Board that Sandisfield spent $260,000 on its new salt shed; Chapter 90, state aid to highways, paid a large portion of the cost. Because Monterey has half the miles of road that Sandisfield does, we receive far less state highway aid.

Forbes reminded the Select Board that FEMA has had or will pay approximately $170,000 of the cost of repairing Tyringham Road after the rainstorms of last fall. Additionally, MEMA will contribute 12½ percent of the road repair cost.

Highlights of a discussion about Fairview Road included the width of the ditches. Miller and Forbes visited Fairview Road and decided that commissioning an engineering plan was useless. Their plan is to widen the road, lay drainage, and keep it as a gravel road. There was a special evening meeting on April 10 so the public could discuss this idea. Given the amount of time and attention the Select Board has spent on the Fairview Road situation, the sparse

attendance at this public meeting was surprising.

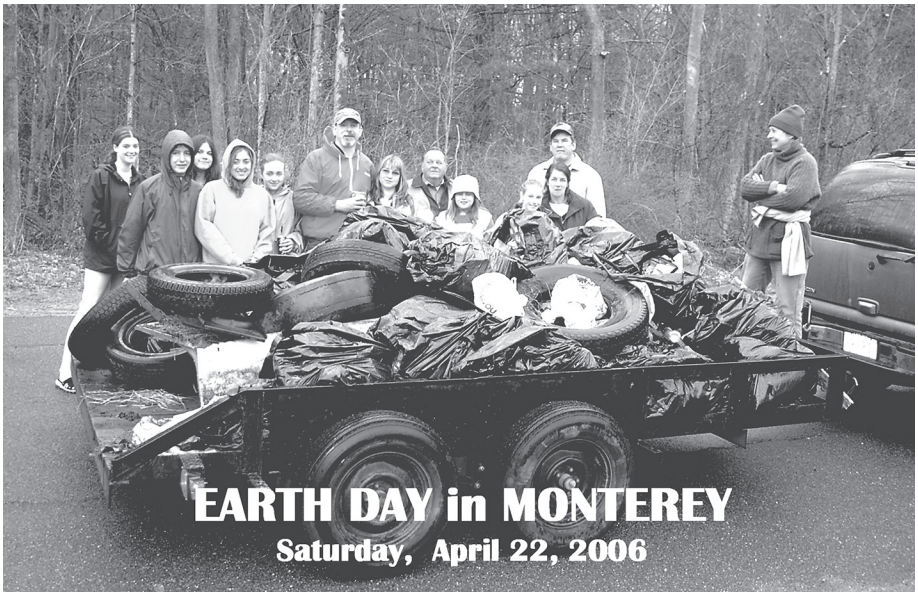
The Highway Department is working on tree trimming with Tamarack. Once that work is completed, the department will begin replacing many culverts. Miller emphasized her concern about removing excess sand from ditches.

Sylbert asked Forbes to remove the four barrels with contaminated oil and oil filters that have been sitting at the transfer station for the last several years. "It's time," he said to hire someone to remove this hazardous waste.

Forbes will make sure that Mark Amstead continues his work on Town Hall so its reconstruction can be finished.

At the April 24th Select Board meeting, Forbes said that over two inches of rain had fallen during the April 22–23 weekend, but since the ground was dry it soaked up the rain without problems.

Select Board member Michael Storch reported on his visit to an Audubon Society meeting about beaver control. He learned that during the last century beavers had disappeared in western Massachusetts, but in 1932 the Audubon Society reintroduced three beavers, which have, over time, produced thousands, if not hundreds of thousands, of descendents. Black bears, eastern coyotes, and bobcats—beavers' natural predators—do not seem to be fulfilling their mission.



Michael Storch

The Earth Day crew displays their collection from Monterey roadsides. A big thanks to them, to Kenn Basler of the General Store for providing coffee and donuts, and to Laury Epstein, Michele Miller, and Michael Storch for organizing the cleanup.

Police Department

Police Chief Gareth Backhaus reported on a burglar alarm at a home on Heron Pond, an arrest following a domestic issue on Chestnut Hill, assistance provided to medical staff after a home accident on Main Road, issuance of a restraining order, a break-in at an apartment in the center of town, an abandoned 911 call on Gould Road, a stray dog reunited with its owner on Blue Hill Road, and a summons delivered to a Chestnut Hill resident to appear in court as a witness.

Backhaus reported that the April 22nd Earth Day town cleanup went well. In three hours the volunteer crew cleaned up trash from the east end of the flats on Main Road to Corashire Road, and from the Hayloft Gallery on Main Road to the boat landing on Route 57. Nonetheless, there is still a great deal of trash along town roads. A discussion ensued about asking Gould Farm to "adopt" the stretch of Main Road from the Roadside Café to Curtiss Road to control trash there. And perhaps the General Store and various neighborhood groups could do likewise in their neighborhoods.

Amongst the abandoned tires, hubcaps, beer and soda cans and bottles, the cleanup crew unearthed a cast iron bathtub,

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a catalytic converter, a large bottle of hypodermic needles, a bong, and various shoes, both matched and unmatched. Estimates of the weight of trash collected hovered around the one-ton mark.

Building Commissioner

Building Commissioner Don Torrico discussed with the Select Board the status of a house being built on Route 23 across from Stevens Lake. Although Torrico had requested that the owners remove the two large metal containers near the road before winter, they are still there.

Town Counsel Jerome Scully advised the Select Board that the Building Commissioner has the legal right to define a dwelling unit. Legal redress can be sought from the ZBA in cases of conflict.

Torrico noted that there is a request to open a take-out pizza window at a residence on Art School Road, request he believes is more applicable to the ZBA than to the Building Commissioner.

The Select Board discussed the problem of the crumbling stonewall on the Goetschius property at 4 Tyringham Road. The problematic wall is in the public right-of-way, so if it falls down, the owners will be responsible. A letter noting this type of liability will be sent to the owners.

Torrico reported that he inspected Camp Half Moon, which was mostly in good shape. The handrails, guardrails, and an addition built ten years ago will be brought up to code. Torrico said he was impressed with the camp's maintenance schedule.

Formal complaints were registered about improper "For Sale" signs posted by Corashire and Hebert realty companies. Town bylaws restrict commercial signs to the property being advertised. As the zoning enforcement officer, Torrico will contact the realtors about removing the roadside signs that are not near the advertised properties.

The Conservation Commission sent an enforcement cease and desist order to Edward Fainer, owner of the property on Main Road with a steep slope that has been cleared without consultation with the commission.

This and That

Town Secretary Melissa Noe reported that the fees for the transfer station sticker remain the same as in 2005. Payment must be made in full by July 1. The applications will be sent by mail. Noe also reported that job descriptions for town employees are being printed and will be delivered to the Select Board shortly.

The Finance Committee discussed with the Select Board the importance of any newly appointed or elected town official being educated about the Massachusetts conflict of interest law. Should there be a perceived or real conflict of interest, a full disclosure letter must be filed with the Town Clerk.

Board of Assessors member Stan Ross reported that the cartographic team, which is closing in on its project, has requested a public hearing to advise people on what the maps will look like.

Bill Johnson and Cliff Weiss reported their findings about a high-speed internet connection for Town Hall. Should this be installed, town residents would be able to hook up by paying both an installment fee and subsequent monthly charges. (See article on p. 11.)

— Laurily K. Epstein

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Memorial Day Celebration, Monday, May 29

Memorial Day is the one day of each year that was set aside to honor all who served in the past and those who are presently serving in the United States Armed Forces. This is particularly the day that we should demonstrate support for the sacrifices made by military personnel and their families in order that we may always enjoy the many freedoms that our forefathers initiated in establishing our Constitution and Bill of Rights.

There will be two events held in our town on this Memorial Day, Monday, May 29.

The first is a solemn service held at 11:00 a.m. at the Veterans Memorial Park. Our own Monterey Veterans will lead the ceremony, assisted by other dedicated supporters and citizens. We urge you to attend this event which will make you proud to be a citizen of this great democratic country.

The second celebration will be the parade through the center of town. It will begin promptly at 1:00 p.m. at Sandisfield Road, proceed to the village center where memorial remembrances will take place, and then continue to the firehouse. There will be refreshments and entertainment for all at the firehouse pavilion and gazebo after the parade.

Also, by tradition, basketball and maybe even softball will take place at Greene Park after the parade.

Make this a family affair on your Memorial Day and enjoy the freedoms that we take for granted.

— Dean P. Amidon, Chairman
Veterans Memorial Committee

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Planning Board News

The Planning Board will come before the town at the annual Town Meeting and request a sizable increase in its yearly appropriation. Over the past few years the Planning Board budget request has been $1,300, much of which was never used and cycled back into the General Fund of the town. This year we are asking for $5,065, which, if granted, will be used for several items and projects that the Planning Board is pursuing. Most importantly, the Planning Board needs a clerk/secretary and $1,300 of the appropriation is earmarked for that expenditure. We also need funds for workshop training for new board members so that they can have educational support and gain knowledge that will advance the expertise of the Planning Board. Also, the top priority for the Planning Board this year is to create a master plan for Monterey. In order to complete this project it would be very helpful to have funds to advertise meetings and hearings, and to hire a consultant from the Berkshire Regional Planning Commission.

The Planning Board has a few items on the Town Meeting Warrant this year. We are seeking to change the definition of Agricultural Use as found in the Monterey Zoning Bylaws, Section II. Definitions. The current definition designates commercial stables and commercial greenhouses as a use by special permit. The amended definition would make commercial stables and commercial greenhouses a use by right. The Planning Board believes that this amendment is in concert with Monterey's stated interest in supporting agricultural enterprises in the town, and brings the Zoning Bylaws closer to reflecting the philosophy of the Right to Farm bylaw, which will also be presented at the Town Meeting.

The second warrant item from the Planning Board is an addition to the Zoning Bylaws Section VI. Tables of Minimums and Maximums, Footnotes. We propose to add a footnote "f" which will state that for the purposes of this bylaw, a retaining wall or other structure that is associated with an approved septic system can be in the setback area when the Board of Health has determined that is the only place it can be. This addition is to avoid the double jeopardy of having your septic plan approved by the Board of Health and then turned down by the Planning Board. Of course the Zoning Board of Appeals makes the final decision in these cases, but the zoning bylaw is quite clear in this regard stating in the definition for Setback that "no buildings or structures" may be in the setback.

The Accessory Dwelling Unit (ADU) proposal, for which there were two hearings this year, has been tabled. While the Planning Board vigorously supports ADU's as a good method of increasing the diversity of housing stock in the town, and believes that this is also a viable way for providing affordable housing, we had to acknowledge the concerns of those who attended the hearings. The Planning Board will continue research in this regard. It is interesting to note that at the Massachusetts Housing Partnership's recent workshop, "Zoning for Affordable Housing," attendees from the Town of Northampton stated that "Allowing uses by right and accessory apartments are our most successful strategy for market rate non 40B affordable housing."

— Maggie Leonard, Chair
Monterey Planning Board

Education Committee Meets May 15

The Monterey Education Committee will meet with the Select Board at the scheduled evening meeting on Monday, May 15, at 7 p.m. in the Town Hall. Everyone is encouraged to attend, not just those with school-age children; the school budget is the largest item on the town budget, so all citizens need to be involved in working out the most effective way for the town's needs to be met.

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Meeting on animal control issues hosted by Monterey Board of Health.

Board of Health News

On March 22nd, the Monterey Board of Health hosted an informational presentation given by Michael Cahill of the Department of Agricultural Resources Bureau of Animal Health to discuss issues regarding animal control. Twenty-nine people attended, filling the meeting room completely. Mr. Cahill reviewed the responsibilities of the Inspector of Animals under Chapter 129 of Massachusetts General Laws and of the Animal Control Officer under Chapter 140. To summarize, the Inspector of Animals is nominated by the town and appointed by the state, and is responsible for rabies control, quarantines, and barn inspections. The Inspector of Animals is a fairly hands-off position that excludes dogs, cats, and rabbits. The Animal Control Officer handles all domestic animal issues and any wild animal that appears to be sick. The Animal Control Officer attends a ten-week Animal Control Certification Class sponsored by the Animal Control Officers Association. Mr. Cahill informed the town that nuisance animals are the responsibility of the homeowner, and they have the option of waiting the animal out or contacting a private animal control contractor (who can be found in the yellow pages) to handle the problem.

Mr. Cahill went on to inform the town of rabies protocol as prepared by the Massachusetts Department of Food and Agriculture, Bureau of Animal Health. Copies of these documents are available at the Monterey Town Hall. Overall, the presentation was successful and very informative, and we thank Mr. Cahill for his time and expertise.

The Monterey Board of Health would like to remind you that if you have a dog complaint or a report of loose livestock or a suspected rapid animal, or if you need to reach the Inspector of Animals or Animal Control Officer you should call the Monterey Police Dispatch at 528-3211. The Board of Health would also like to remind you that all dogs and cats need to have updated rabies vaccinations and that any out-of-state dogs and cats must comply with Massachusetts regulations.

— Monterey Board of Health

Astronomy Night May 26

Did you know that if our sun were envisioned as a softball here in Monterey, the next nearest star would be a tennis ball in Las Vegas?

To learn more about our universe and the night sky, come to the Community Astronomy Night on Friday, May 26, at the Monterey Meetinghouse (the church) basement. In case of cloudy weather, the event will be rescheduled to Sunday, May 28, or Friday, June 2, if necessary.

We welcome back Richard Sanderson, who led a similar evening two winters ago, when the clouds stayed too low and thick for us to be able to go out with telescopes. This year we hope to be able to find a clear evening sky on one of our chosen dates. Richard is Curator of Physical Science at the Springfield Science Museum, where he is Planetarium Director. He will be joined by Dave Galiup, President of the Springfield Naturalists Club and longtime astronomy educator.

We will meet in the church basement at 8:00 p.m. for roughly an hour of explanation of some of the principles of astronomy and a discussion of what to look for when going out for observation. By that time the twilight will have dimmed enough for us to be able to go outdoors with several telescopes to view Jupiter, Saturn, and the Hercules Star Cluster, among other sights. Bring your binoculars and telescopes!

The program is free, sponsored by the Monterey Cultural Council, which will be providing some light refreshments. For information call Joe Baker at 528-9385.

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Life Changes—Even in Monterey

Evening of Nostalgia Scheduled for May Community Potluck

Just as now, there was a lot going on in Monterey in the late 1970s and 1980s—steak fries at the fire department, library events, parades, weddings, births, funerals, music, picnics. If it was happening, you can bet professional photographer Don Victor was there, probably with camera in hand to record it all. If you were in town then or just want to see what it was like, come to the community potluck dinner on May 10th in the community room of the Monterey Church when Don will entertain us with pictures showing how we were (younger!) in Monterey in the old days. As usual, we will gather at 6:00 p.m. for a meal together, and the program will begin around 7:00. This will be the last community potluck of the season, so we hope for a good turnout.

Those of us attending the April potluck were treated to three amazing films and stimulating conversation by filmmaker, healer, and activist Fidel Moreno. We were fortunate to have him as our guest and, with his plans to create a cultural center in Pittsfield, we can look forward to hearing more from him in the future. We thank Fidel for so graciously sharing his wisdom and his art with us.

Everyone is invited to join us on May 10th with an offering of food to share, a place setting for yourself, and a serving utensil. It promises to be a great time.

Transfer Station Sticker Applications

It's almost time to renew your transfer station sticker for the next fiscal year (July 1, 2006–June 30, 2007). Renewal applications are being mailed to those who provided a legible mailing address on last year's application. We are also offering to mail your sticker(s) to you so you don't have to make a special trip to the Town Hall to purchase them. If you do not receive this packet in the mail and would like to take advantage of this mail-in option please go to the town's website: www.monterey-ma.org and click on Town Government and Departments, then Transfer Station, and print out the application. Fill out the renewal application in its entirety (please be sure to print clearly) and mail it to: Monterey Town Hall, Transfer Station Sticker Renewal, P.O. Box 308, Monterey, MA 01245

Each resident will be issued 2 stickers, and license plate numbers and the state issued in must be provided before each sticker will be issued. You will need to enclose your check in the amount of $35.00 ($100.00 for businesses) made payable to Town of Monterey with your application and a self-addressed stamped envelope if you want to have your stickers mailed to you. Sticker(s) will not be issued if the application is not filled out in its entirety and/or if a check is not enclosed; stickers will not be mailed unless a self-addressed stamped envelope is also enclosed.

If you prefer to purchase your sticker(s) in person, they will be available at the Town Hall, Monday to Friday from 8:30 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. and Saturdays from 9:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. Stickers will not be sold at the transfer station. Please do not hesitate to contact the Town Hall with any questions you may have.

— Melissa Noe, Town Secretary

Monterey Weather Station Vandalized

About a year ago, the National Weather Service installed a state-of-the-art weather station in Monterey, behind the Town Highway Garage off Gould Road. This station was a prototype, stand-alone, and fully automated weather reporting station that reported hourly by satellite to the National Weather Service. The station was close to being certified and was to be used in forecasting for this area.

On Wednesday, March 29, 2006, between 6:00 and 7:00 p.m., someone vandalized this station, destroyed the instruments, and attempted to set it on fire. Approximately $10,000's worth of damage was done.

If you happened to see anything or know who did this, please contact Chief Backhaus at the Monterey Police Department at 413-528-3211.

Hopefully, the National Weather Service will rebuild the station and not move it elsewhere.

— Maynard Forbes

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(l to r) Susan Sellew, Gige O'Connell, and Lew Scheffey of the Friends of Wilson McLaugnlin House meeting with landscape designer Walt Cudnohufsky and architect Steve McAlister about plans for the Monterey Community Center.

Community Center Meeting May 13

Input, Input, Input

Kind of a funny looking word but "input" is the word of the month for the committee working on the Monterey Community Center. Critical decisions will be made based on input from the community that will be gathered in two ways.

Input Session with Architects

On Saturday morning, May 13, from 10:30-11:30 at the Town Hall there will be a town-wide input session with a team from our recently chosen architectural firm, Clark & Green of Great Barrington. The committee will have met several times previous to this public meeting with our team: Steve McAlister, architect; Rob Hoogs, civil engineer; and Walt Cudnohufsky, landscaper/visionary. They are a dynamic trio experienced in looking at such projects from every imaginable angle to help us come up with decisions that will suit the town. Both Steve and Rob live in Monterey, and Walt hails from another small hill town, Ashfield. This input meeting will be held to just one hour, so you can go to the dump, pick up your mail, attend the meeting, and be home in plenty of time for lunch.

The Survey

A survey will arrive in your mail box around the same time as the Monterey News (if you are on the Assessors' list, currently our only mailing list). It will be inside the Community Center brochure, and we encourage you to open this mailing, and give some thought to the project. You can also access the survey on line at our web site: www.ccmonterey.org.

We want to emphasize that this Community Center is just that—a center we ALL are designing to suit the needs of the town. Everyone has something valuable to offer to the project, and we want your participation so that the center reflects the needs of the entire town.

To return your completed survey do one of the following: (1) mail to FWMH, PO Box 302, Monterey, MA 01245; (2) drop in the box in the lobby of the Monterey Town Hall; (3) drop in the box at the Monterey General Store; or (4) fill out the online version at www.ccmonterey.org.

We would like to have all surveys returned by Wednesday, May 10th and the information gathered will be presented at the May 13th meeting with the architectural team. THANK YOU!

— Susan Sellew

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Library Notes

The interior of the library was painted last month by Richard Piepho—many thanks to him for a beautiful job. Beth Ziegler dusted the woodwork on the ceiling, and now that the carpet has been repaired without charge (thanks to Country Carpets, who installed it almost thirty years ago) and cleaned we are ready to celebrate the 75th anniversary of the building. We hope to have an open house full of memories and activities for kids and adults on Saturday morning of Columbus Day weekend. Trivia question: Where was the library located before it moved to its present location? (Answer is at the end of this column.)

One of the projects we would like to undertake is to exhibit any art that shows off our beautiful library. If you have an old sketch or photograph that you'd like to lend us to exhibit along with what we already have, we would love to see it! Any memorabilia or favorite stories would also be appreciated for a scrapbook that will show what the library has meant to this town. I'm always amazed at the visitors from other parts of the country, and even other countries, who aren't fortunate enough to have a library with all the services we offer.

One additional item we are circulating this year is a pass to our state parks. This pass will save you the parking fee for Benedict Pond, York Lake, Mount Greylock, and any of the other parks run by the DCR. We still have passes for the Bidwell House, the Berkshire Museum, Hancock Shaker Village, and the Norman Rockwell Museum.

Look for some of the work done by our nine to twelve-year-olds elsewhere in the *News* this month (see p. 19). It's hard to believe, but our first year will be over on May 1 when we have a pizza party at the General Store followed by a discussion of *The Penderwicks,* winner of a National Book Award. The book is set in the Berkshires and tells of a fun-filled family vacation. Many thanks to Franny Huberman for all her work!

For years we have been a part of the Western Massachusetts Regional Library System. WMRLS runs the bookmobile, along with other programs such as interlibrary loan and librarian education and consultation. The bookmobile has provided us with access over the years to books we couldn't afford financially or fit because of space limitations. Videos and audio books have been especially popular. For about three years, due to the state budget WMRLS has not had money to buy new materials. They decided to form a Friends of WMRLS organization, which raises money and gives it to the region to help buy materials. Friends of WMRLS is having a membership drive, and I ask that anyone who has ever borrowed a video, audio book, or just a book from the bookmobile consider joining. The membership form can be found at www.wmrls.org/friends, or request one over the phone at 413-665-9898. Now that they are getting money to spend on acquisitions the bookmobile has been able to get DVDs and audio books on CDs. Please consider joining. The cost to you is equivalent to buying a new book or two, but WMRLS will buy something that will be circulated for years and benefit many people.

On that note, I would like to report that the Monterey Library has started a CD collection of audio books and will be getting some DVDs to join what we borrow from the bookmobile. I'm amazed at how many donations of CDs we've received already, but we have plenty of room for more. As we start a DVD collection we would also appreciate any donations. If you have any of these items that you've already listened to or seen, many of our patrons would be grateful to do likewise. Of course everyone is welcome to check out what we already have!

The Western Massachusetts Regional Library System is currently undergoing a study of how it does its job. There is a quick (less than five minutes) online survey for residents of towns under 10,000. You do not have to use the Monterey Library to participate. Please take a moment, go to www.libraryconsultant.com/WMRLSSurvey.htm, and fill it out. The Monterey Library will not be seeing any responses, nor will the Region, as the survey is being done by private consultants. If you are dependent on CD audio books, or want to ensure the bookmobile continues to visit, please take the time. Be aware that the bookmobile no longer serves much of the state, as the other regions have cut this service.

— Mark Makuc, Library Director

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No More LakeFest or FLG, unless Monterey Steps Up

LakeFest is in danger of becoming extinct. The fate of the Friends of Lake Garfield (formerly the Lake Garfield Association) is careening in the same direction. If this doesn't matter to you, you need not read on. But if you care about LakeFest and you're concerned about the health and well-being of Monterey's glistening jewel, Lake Garfield, then it's time for you to step up and do something.

On May 6, the town votes on whether to allot $2,500 to LakeFest (Article 16 on the Town Meeting warrant), as it has done the last two years. If it is voted down, LakeFest is down and out. LakeFest will not happen. In the past, FLG in conjunction with its members and the Monterey business community has raised and contributed the majority of the almost $10,000 that it takes to undertake LakeFest. This year, FLG funds are limited. The town's contribution is essential—and, even with that money, the $5,000 for fireworks will not be available.

David Grover and the Big Band blew us all away last year, kids and adults, alike. We'd like to have them again, along with the free motorboat rides, canoe rides, all the kids' activities on the beach, the potluck dinner, the marshmallow roast, et al—but the first step needs to be the town's $2,500 contribution. If you have a vote, use it. If you have an opinion, voice it. And that's just half the battle …

The next step has to be for volunteers to step up and make LakeFest happen. The numerous calls for help have fallen on deaf ears. Some of us have put in enormous efforts over the last five years, and we feel it's time for others to share the helm. Is there anybody out there? Anybody who cares at all about LakeFest? If not, maybe we're just overzealous about drawing the community together for a bonding day at our lake—maybe LakeFest should just die. If you feel otherwise, if you've enjoyed LakeFest and would like it to continue, you need to do something about it. Call Janet Cathcart, FLG's president, 528-8217, and volunteer your services.

Along with the future of LakeFest, FLG's future is growing dim. Janet and her vice president, this writer, who've both served for five years, are stepping aside. If no one steps up to fill these positions, FLG as we know it will be no more. Our Ecology Committee, headed by Pat Edelstein with her the endless energy and teeming talents, has kept issues related to the health of Lake Garfield in the foreground. We've participated in statewide forums and joined with other lake associations to stay on top of lake issues. We've bought and unleashed milfoil weevils to devour burgeoning milfoil weeds. We've dispatched beetles to curtail the onslaught of the suffocating purple loosestrife weeds, initially in Brewer's Pond. We've sought to educate and disseminate materials to teach us all how to preserve and protect Lake Garfield.

Whether you live on or near the lake or not, Lake Garfield enhances the value of your property. It is here for you to enjoy. It is Monterey's prize possession. If, until now, you've been content to let others be its guardian, be it known that era is over. It's time for you to do your share. It breaks my heart to wonder, is anybody out there listening …

— Hy Rosen

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High Speed Internet and In-Home Wireless Options

A couple of years ago I investigated the choices available for higher speed connections to the Internet versus plain old telephone service (POTS). The same choices exist now but the prices have dropped significantly. Here are the current alternatives:

- Verizon: Plain old telephone service and DSL (soon?).
- Direcway: Satellite Communication.

POTS: This is the technology that most of us have used to get to the Internet. This connection provided by Verizon utilizes the same wire our telephones use. Speeds of 9.6 kbps (kilobits/second) to 64 kbps are typical. The speed of receiving and transmitting using POTS technology are the same. The quality of this service is very susceptible to poor line quality—namely, many splices in the line due to the tornado of '95. The perceived quality is further impacted by the large amount of graphic/image data that make up the majority of the content on the Internet. The quantity of this data impacts the perceived speeds. The cost for this service ranges from $0 (NetZero's10-hour/month free but painfully slow service) to around $30/month.

Direct Subscriber Line (DSL): This is a service telephone companies can offer over their network if the home is within 2.5 miles of the switch that ties the home to the rest of the telephone grid. The switch for Monterey residents is in Great Barrington by the train station, obviously more than 2.5 miles away. Verizon must locate another switching point to solve this problem. They have located one at the little building by the firehouse. This switch is connected to the Great Barrington switch via fiber optic cable, which offers greater speed and quality of service. Rumor has it that Verizon will soon offer DSL service in Monterey. Speed of 1.5 mbps (megabits/second) receiving and 384 kps transmitting are often quoted. Cost is usually $75 /month but falls as competition increases. A DSL modem is usually needed at a $75–100 one-time cost.

DirecWay Satellite: I'm told that fifty or so residences have installed this offering for high-speed Internet connection. A dish that sends/receives signals to the home and other people on the Internet is installed facing the southern sky. Kenn Basler has installed a dish at the Monterey General Store, visible from the Post Office. Two wires (send and receive) connect to a box in the home—essentially a satellite modem. The speed of receiving information from the satellite is 1.2 mbps and 400 kbps for sending from the home computer (these are actual figures for my setup). The one-time charge for the dish, modem, and installation is $599.98 and there is a monthly fee of $59.99. This includes an Internet Service Provider ISP and four email accounts so you do not need AOL or an additional phone . Granby TV is the local contact at 413-467-3278.

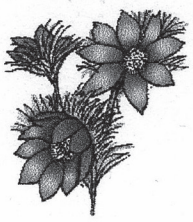
NOTE: You can also get DirecTv from this same dish for about $100 more for the added hardware. There are all kinds of TV options for this service; the last one I read about is $30/month for a two-year commitment.

Internet Summary: When DSL is available, both DSL and DirecWay will offer the same performance, but DSL will require a smaller one-time charge. Monthly costs will create a competitive environment. For example, in the Boston area, DSL charges are as low as $20/month. My guess is that Verzion will offer DSL within a year.

Wireless Network in the Home: This basically permits multiple computers to send messages to each other without pulling wires throughout the premises and permits laptop users to work anywhere in the range of the signal. Each computer needs a wireless Ethernet network interface card (NIC)—some are built in at the factory—and there must be a wireless router that ties to the Internet and distributes the received information to the proper computer. The NIC is about $50 and the router is about $100. In many cases the router supports both wired (10/100 mbps) and wireless (typically 54 mbps) connections. My suggestion is to get the same vendor's offering for both. Common brand names include LinkSys, NetGear, and D-link. These brands include software to make the setup very easy.

— Bill Johnson, with Cliff Weiss

GREEN ARTS GARDEN DESIGN



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I am a universe
peopled by memories
planeted by passions
pursuant to some nebula of question
flung into new limits
through flaming gates
to solitudes unknown
and you and you
and all the rest
are co-existent in this mystery
each of strange origin

with private seasons
of his own

your god has other saints than mine
your words have different meanings
the same events form different crystals
the same songs
rise and fall to other rhythms
in vaulting echoes
as your days disrobe

our ellipsoid orbits
but intersect and part
in love or diffidence of heart.
our entrances do mark

a separate anguish in the heavens
your space to sweep
some other arc
of time than mine
our exit
like a comet's tail
leaves but a brief shower
of implication
in its trail

loneliness is measured
slowly, slowly
by a futile compass –
that finality of I
and so we spin
back upon ourselves
upon the endless painful axis
of a why
yet while misfortunes mock us
scar our surfaces
still love will spread its singing fire
and life creep and seep
throughout our substance
across insistent networks of desire

I yearn to focus
to burn again with wonder
into a sun
to glow, to be lifted
by something greater
to be one
but while you are void of measure
I am at a separate distance fading
having reached my apogee of pain
for I know now
in the trembling darkness
that our starry and divergent tracks
will never be conjunct again.

— A. O. Howell

The Sorrowful Blues of San Inverno

"depression is the dung heap
for underground art!" he says
he who lurks inside the mind
of pain and permutation
cold grey skies and spittle rain
a poor excuse for snow storms
tight white knees, shoulders deranged
poor excuse is how it goes
we never get what we want —
only what's on the blackboard
the slate with my name and yours:
grand entry, slight departure!
I just want to hold you girl
while the world is turning black
remembering the color
of love when the stars were close
when the cold deep blue above
was endless as young kisses
when the banks of snow only
deepened our imaginings
for the great congregations
steeped in prayer below the freeze
yesterday's dreams and labors
fermenting, resting, ready
and willing to be tested
transmuted on the high way
I just want to hold you girl
'til the dung heap is ready
'til the blackboard is empty
and the underground is full
while the world is turning black
coming undone under foot
subterranean, sad eyed
'til the sweet root is held high

— R. Zukowski

Sunday Go To Meeting

We were engaged, yet I must meet
the test, sleep in the hallowed place
your grandfather called "camp,"
follow the stones your father laid
down to the lake and swim across
to touch the amber rock. I must
mount the steep and unpaved road
where flew a scarlet tanager,
my sign of hope, and pass behind
the hunter's shack with bottles strewn,
to walk with you the wagon trail
vestigial through the wood. You leaped
from stone to stone to cross the stream,
a forest nymph to lead me on
wet footed through the iron gate
into the graveyard bright with flags
for Revolutionary men.

On to the eighteenth-century house
owned by the Finnish couple. I
must see the oven hid within
the chimney. I must sit to view
the husband's latest works of art
set one by one upon a chair.

Outside, his wife, a consul once,
gave advice on how to scale
the local summit. We climbed to see
Greylock's stuck up nose between
the little pines since grown to block
such pretense, while to the west,
a Catskill peak was poised to spy
above a low Taconic ridge
upon our lofty dalliance.

Come Sunday in the meeting house
you led me to the pew where once
your grandfather had sat with you
beside him. Now there was I
where the dusty window panes
diffused a primal sun. I knew
myself installed within your plot.

The general store across the way
was shut. The merchant, usher now,
ran in haste to peel the bell.
His wife was organist who raised
on wheezing stops the call to praise.
Out of some dark grace-haunted
deep the minister. He strode
briskly to the pulpit just
as right outside our window two
demonic motorcycles lurched
and spit profanely up the hill.

But The Word went on as the Word will
to let light be.

Now more than half a century
we. You are shut in behind
a blotted mind. You cannot come
to cottage, lake or wagon trail,
to mountain top or meeting house.
And I? Where can I be?

I push the button to release
the door of the dementia ward.
I find you and I sit beside
as in that Puritan pew, your hand
now skeletal in mine. I hear
"Let there be light!" The light is ours.

— Roy Shepard

From the Meetinghouse …

But on the first day of the week, at early dawn, they came to the tomb, taking the spices that they had prepared. They found the stone rolled away from the tomb, but when they went in, they did not find the body. — Luke 24:1–2

"But" according to Luke, is where Easter begins. The first word Luke used in witness to the Resurrection, "but" is how the good news comes to be known. This might strike us as odd since we are perhaps used to hearing "but" as the beginning of bad news. After all, the very definition of the word is that it implies opposition, marking a contrast if not a conflict. "But," as in "Not this but that," is "on the contrary"; "buts," as in "There will be no 'buts' about it," are reservations or objections. Given this, it seems "but" could barely bespeak good news. And just so, "But" seems the right place to begin on that first Easter morn when the good news was but a deep dawning out of deep darkness, as yet fully to shine forth. Just so, this "But" of opposition seems the right place to begin on that first Easter morn, setting the story up, it would seem, for contrast if not downright conflict. The women, after all, were far from overjoyed at the sight of the open and empty tomb: they had come with spices they'd prepared so to anoint Jesus' body and to entomb him with dignity and to grieve for their own sakes as if to come to some closure following the months of proclaiming Jesus as Christ and then watching him crucified along with their hope. Just so, "But," this cosmic "on the contrary," seems the right place to begin.

Monterey Coffee Club

Egg seekers gathered on steps of church before the Monterey Coffee Club's annual Easter egg hunt on the library lawn.

Preachers face a terrible temptation during the Easter season—that is, to defend the reality of the Resurrection, perhaps even to attempt to prove the Resurrection as a historical happening, as a material occurrence. I won't offer such apologia. No amount of reasonable argumentation will assuage doubt, just as none will assail faith. What's more, Easter defies reason, as reason is the human project of trusting that cause leads to effect in a provable and reproducible way, while Easter would have us believe in a God who works outside of our historic and scientific ways of knowing. Easter would have us believe in a God who "Buts" into the history that we are so busy making and into our very lives that we long to control. To be the Easter people those in the church are called to be, to come to the tomb in the faith that we'll find it empty, is to believe in a God who "Buts" into our business so to perplex us and to amaze us and, yes, even to terrify us, to cause us as it did those women with their spices to collapse with our faces to the ground, perplexed, amazed, terrified, interrupted, exhausted.

I wonder if this was one cause of the women's collapse—that they had encountered a beginning where they had expected an end. There is, after all, some relief in

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having reached the end. Letting go of hope, letting go of expectation, letting go of promises and forgetting proclamations and dismissing the possible in favor of what is probable—there is some relief in all of this. There is some relief in ultimate resignation. Jesus said from the cross, "It is finished," meaning it is complete, it is made perfect. And, for these women who had heard him speak this, there likely was some relief in being able to accept it as true—that Jesus' death made their journey with him now complete, albeit perfectly tragic, but perfect nonetheless, allowing them now to get back to business as usual. There is some relief in ceasing so intensely to care, in having no longer to hold out hope for the fulfillment of most amazing promises, or to walk in the Eternal Way that leads to truth and life, or to bear witness to the Resurrection that will never be proven beyond a reasonable doubt. There is some relief in reaching the end of Incarnation, the end of God's Kingdom, indeed the end of God who is truth and love. Isn't this beautiful, terrible tragedy what the modern age has largely been about?

But God who yet lives will not let us alone. But God who yet lives will not resign us to resignation. But God who yet lives and Christ who yet lives and the Spirit who yet quickens the creation with new life will not leave us be to make of ourselves and of this world what has been tried and proven historically true—competition such that there are "haves" and "have-nots," conflict such that there are winners and losers, intergenerational violence, vengeful warfare, and relentless injustice such that some will live (though likely in fear) and some will die (though likely suffer first). No, God will not so leave us alone, but instead rises to meet us again and again, that we might rise to live the lives to which we are called—lives of communion such that all may have life and have it in abundance, lives of reconciliation with God and with one another such that God's peace may prevail, lives of forgiveness and faithfulness and love. Just so, we might be like the women who first came to the tomb of Christ, expecting to find death but finding life. If so, then it's time for us to rise as Christ has risen and to continue on this journey that has a purpose but no end in sight.

— Elizabeth Goodman

Bidwell House Interns Sought

Teenagers are invited to apply for a two-week internship this summer at the Bidwell House Museum during regular hours from 11:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m., Thursday to Monday. A stipend of $200 will be awarded to selected high school students at the end of the two-week work period in June, July, or August. The stipend is made possible by a grant from Berkshire Taconic Foundation.

Call the Bidwell House at 413-528-6888 for an application, which should be submitted by May 12th. This is an opportunity to explore colonial history and museum life. Area residents are urged to pass the information on to high-school-age students who will be living here this summer.

Dual Homeowners Corner

The sun is shining, the sky is blue, the leaves are beginning to grow on the trees, and the daffodils, tulips, forsythia, and violets are showing their beautiful colors. Finally, spring is really here. This is the time to be outdoors and to take advantage of our beautiful environment. We are so fortunate that we have a special cozy home on the waterfront where we can relax and enjoy the unique atmosphere of the Berkshires. We want to participate in events such as the sing-along at the Bidwell House and go to the renovated Gould Farm Roadside Store and Cafe.

Our children and grandchildren now live in Boston, Portland, Oregon, and Media, Pennsylvania. They have already made plans to be in Monterey in the middle of the summer and to resume their regular summer schedule of lake activities, which include climbing Monument Mountain, listening to music at Tanglewood, observing the birds, swimming in Lake Buel, riding in the canoe, or rowing up and down the lake, visiting with each other and with old friends, and carrying on the family tradition of being part of this wonderful community.

— Barbara Haver

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Seed Beans and Immigration Policy

Thirty years ago Joe and I were living in our tipi, keeping our fresh food in a spring box in the brook, clearing land for the garden, orchard, and house. We were part of the early '70's "back-to-the-land" movement, but it usually felt like just the two of us with shovel and chainsaw, hacking away at the woods.

For cash we worked at the local ski area in the winter and played weekends in an acoustic string band. One time we were sitting in a bar in Lenox, getting ready to play. We thought we were all cleaned up and normal looking, but the bartender, younger than us, began quizzing us.

Pretty soon it was out about the tipi and the chainsaw. We said we aimed to live in a self-sufficient and sustainable way on our rocky wooded hillside. I think it was those two "s" words that rang a bell for him.

"I see! You're survivalists!"

I still remember the feel of the smile on my face as I replied. It felt like new shoes that look okay but really don't fit right.

"Uh, yeah, I guess we are. We want to survive, certainly …"

After a few years of hand-tool survival, we made it into our house and stepped up to a lifestyle with time to read magazines and look around at the world. We learned that survival means different things to different folks and that the term "survivalist" as used by the young bartender would not at this time describe our approach to life on the farm.

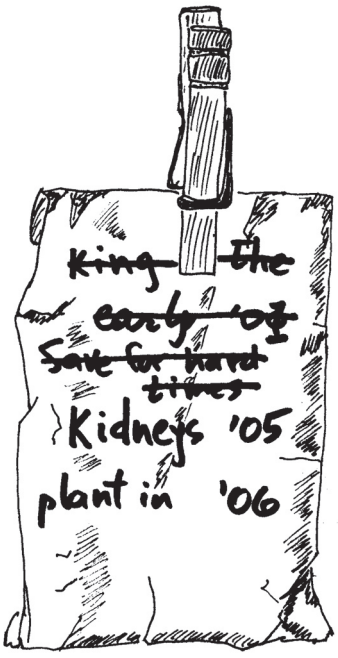
For one thing, we are not armed. Also we don't wear camo clothing because it puts us off with its military feel, and although we are critical of our government, we think people need laws and agreements to help them be their best selves. We think the laws need enforcement. Our image of the survivalist is a person in a remote place, withdrawn from society and government, leading a completely independent and self-sufficient life. Well, maybe not completely. Maybe not yet manufacturing his/her own barbed wire, boots, and guns.

Years ago in Massachusetts when the *Mayflower* finally reached Cape Cod after a painful crossing that cost the lives of so many on board, the company still was not able to land. Instead they spent the winter aboard the ship, anchored in shallow water. There was sickness, starvation, and death, and men waded ashore, looking for something to eat. With their clothing soaked and freezing from the winter Atlantic, these desperate men searched for anything, plant or animal, to take back to the ship. Imagine their joy when they stumbled upon baskets of corn, cached in a sandbank! They fell down and prayed, thankful to their god for saving them. They took the corn (and the baskets).

The Wampanoags watched all this, strangers unearthing the selected and saved seeds for next year's planting. I wonder what they said to *their* gods at this point, and I marvel that they still greeted the starving Puritans with food and friendship.

This is the time of year I sort through my seeds. I have packets marked "CA Cranberry Pole Beans, HMF '05" and "Save for Hard Times." That second category is not for planting this year. It's in case this year's crop fails and I get no beans and no seed for the '07 garden.

Every spring I update the Hard Times



packets, putting newer seeds in them to save, and relabeling the old packets, "Eat!" When I do, I think of the Wampanoags and the survivalists. What would I do if strangers found my Hard Times beans and gobbled them up while thanking their gods for this life-saving gift? Would it be time for me to think about camo trousers and shotguns? Or would I welcome the strangers with corn, beans, squash, and roast turkey? What would *my* immigration policy look like?

— Bonner J. McAllester

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Letter from College

A Weekend with a U.S. Ambassador

There are many experiences this year that have changed my life, provided me with a broader perspective, enriched my knowledge (what else is college best known for?), and encouraged my aspirations for the future. Perhaps one of the most exciting was the weekend I spent with the U.S. Ambassador to Cambodia. How did this happen? Quite simply I know his two children, both students at Middlebury, fairly well, especially his daughter. The night he arrived, she and I, along with a mutual friend, had dinner and took in a movie before meeting his flight. It came in early and we almost missed him. Luckily I went downstairs and, fairly sure that I recognized him from pictures I'd seen, managed to get up the nerve to ask him if he was indeed Joseph Mussomeli. He was relieved that I asked, and we made our way back to Middlebury in high spirits stopping for a fast food dinner on the way. We talked about politics, his recent visit to Washington, and the talk he was giving the next morning at the college. I'm not going to go into specifics on his personal political opinions, which are off limits because he works for the State Department. However, I can very safely say that he is incredibly smart, sensitive, observant, and eloquent, with a wonderful sense of humor.

His talk at Middlebury was very well attended despite being on an official day off for Winter Carnival. His area of expertise is extensive throughout the world, particularly in Southeast Asia. Mr. Mussomeli's life has been exciting, and for those of you who might be interested in reading it, his biography on the State Department website isn't exactly a standard U.S. official bio. The next evening, I went out to dinner with him, his family, and some of his son's friends. Because there were fewer of us I got to see his fatherly side, which, along with pleasant dinner conversation, was a comforting experience. I was afraid I might be too forward in my eagerness, but during the visit he was perfectly willing to engage my questions and offer advice for a future in the foreign services. In the time I spent with him, his humanity and sheer enjoyment of his job inspired me to think about my future immediately after college and what jobs might appeal to me. I don't know exactly where I'm headed; I do know that I would like to find something as perfectly suited to me as Mr. Mussomeli's position is to him. Or you could also say I'd love to be as perfectly suited for a job as Mr. Mussomeli is as an ambassador.

Mr. Mussomeli is diplomatic, and yet clearly has his opinions. One of the important things he mentioned was that being able to talk about many areas of interest, such as classical music, technology, or history, is critical to the art of being a diplomat. Another tidbit he passed on was that you did not have to be a lawyer to be in the State Department. I'm still interested in law school, but it was nice to know it isn't crucial, and he speaks from personal experience. He and his family are returning for his son's graduation this spring and I look forward to seeing them. I hope he knows, at least in part, how exciting and inspiring his passion for diplomacy and leadership is, and that it has had a great influence on me. It was a short visit, but one that will have a lasting impact.

Middlebury offers many incredible opportunities to its students: rich classes and a host of student activities and organizations. It is a true liberal arts college with an expansive curriculum and a diverse and passionate student body that makes its mark on an individual. However I find as I maneuver the maze of offerings and balance my study time that it is the mixture of all of them that rounds out my life so perfectly at Middlebury. The fact that I was able to meet and learn from the ambassador was incredible, but it was the dinnertime conversations and family dynamics that I enjoyed the most. They included the presence of a diplomat, but most importantly gave me the opportunity to know him more as a person, and for that I'm deeply honored and grateful.

— Tarsi Dunlop

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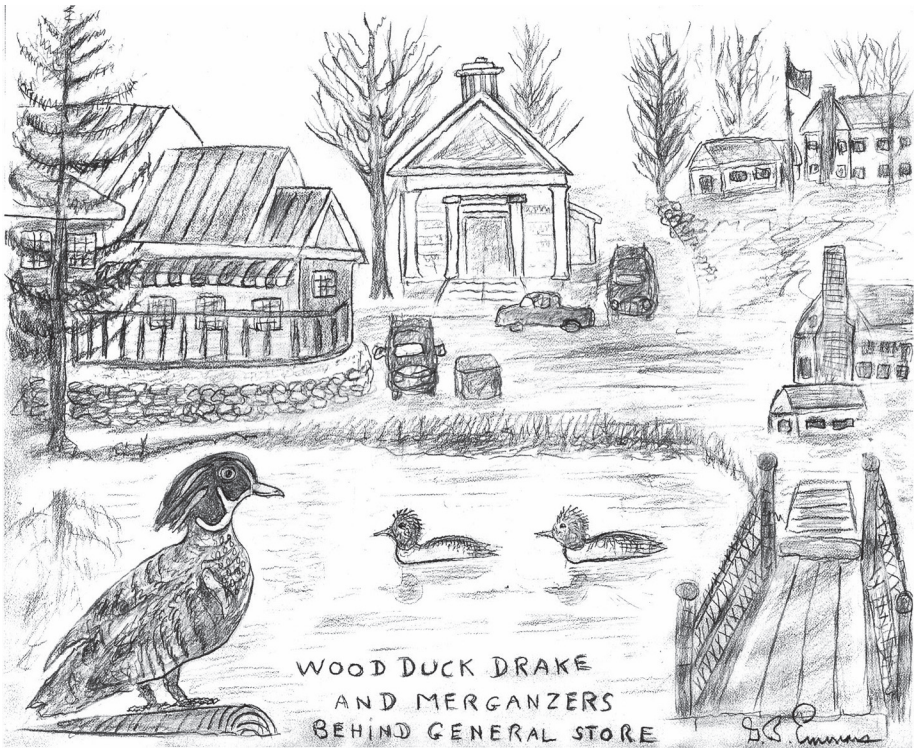
Wildlife Sightings and Tree Plantings

Behind the Monterey General Store, a pair of mergansers has been seen for the second year in a row on the Konkapot River. Wood ducks are very numerous this year, and a hen is nesting about twenty feet up in a hollow tree on Sandisfield Road, which is common, but hard on the ducklings when they hatch out and must fly down to be led to water.

Another mountain lion sighting, this one crossing Route 23 at the top of the hill just beyond Keyes Corner at 4:30 in the afternoon of Wednesday, April 13, nearly causing an accident (too close for comfort). Several motorists were involved, the first in line having to swerve off the road to miss the big cat with the long tail. The second car was driven by a wildlife control officer, who described the incident. The cat came out of David McAllester's woods with a single leap, touched down in the road only one time in the center, and then bounded into the brush on the other side and out of sight. No one seems surprised at this report, but there are still many who refuse to believe that this fourth largest cat in the world is actually here.



A cow moose might be seen on Route 57, from east of New Marlborough Center to several miles from there, immediately after the "Entering Sandisfield" sign, feeding around a pond. About seven in the evening is the best time to look.

Meanwhile, closer to our village center, new tree plantings of some six or seven varieties continue the row begun along the berm on the south side of Main Road. According to Tree Warden Roger Tryon, Gould Farm volunteers provided the soil, labor, wood shavings, and watering essential for a high survival rate. As the years go by, motorists will also enjoy coming by, as they enter and leave Monterey, where the image of a small country town is still preserved. Thanks to Roger and Gould Farm.

— George Emmons

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Library Children's Book Group Book Reviews

The Monterey Library children's book group has been meeting once a month since November. We have shared many good books and have enjoyed getting to know each other better. While we participated in the Massachusetts Book Award program, we practiced the art of describing a book in a short, catchy way, such as one might find on a book jacket. All of the group members wrote short book reviews during our last meeting, and some children were willing to share their reviews with the *Monterey News*.

Chasing Vermeer, by Blue Balliet, is about two ordinary children who find themselves in the center of an art scandal, trying to protect a priceless painting from being stolen and sold on the black market. It is a fast paced book with a complex plot and a surprise around every corner.

— Gabriella Makuc

I Freddy, by Deitrof Reiche, is about a little hamster that was bought from a pet shop and got moved around a bit. He teaches himself to read and write on a computer. I recommend this book because I thought it was very good, cute, and funny.

— Sophie Linscott

Dragon Rider, by Cornelia Funke, is a fast-paced adventure with magical creatures and a quick globe-trotting plot that will leave readers wondering about the outcome. It is a must for fans of fantasy and adventure.

— Jonah Carlson

I Freddy, by Dietrof Reiche, is about a hamster named Freddy who wants to see if the promised land of Assrya really exists, so he has to make a quick escape! My recommendation on this book is very big. —Cavanaugh Wolski

The Secret School, by Avi, is a book about a girl named Ida Bidson. She was a fourteen-year-old who wanted to be a schoolteacher, but couldn't because she wasn't able to finish eighth grade and go on to high school. I really loved this book because it was funny and really, really good.

— Maura Folmer

The Birchbark House, by Louise Erdrich, is a great book about an Indian girl named Omakayas and her life. Each section is about a season. Through the book, Omakayas grows up and smallpox comes to her village. Her sister and little brother get it; her sister lives, but her brother doesn't. At this point it is scary. I recommend this book to anyone who likes adventure and tragedy. It is one of the best books.

— Eloisa Dean

The Secret School, by Avi, is a book about a fourteen-year-old girl who attends a remote school in Colorado. She is about to take her final test to go to high school. I recommend this book to people who like funny and well-written books.

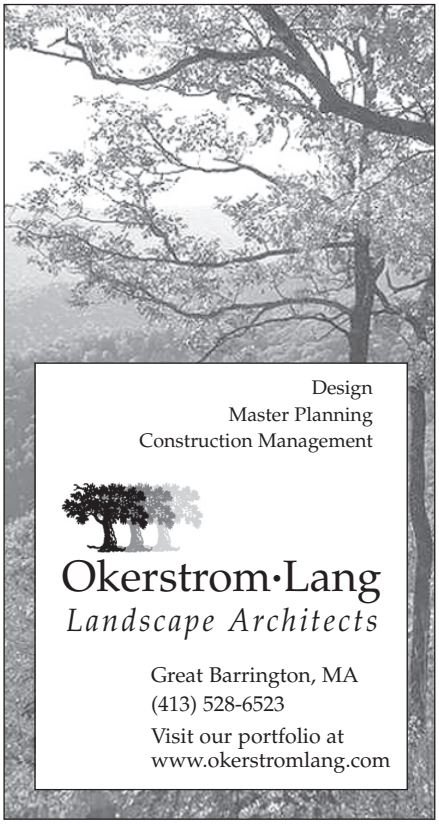
— Morwenna Boyd

The book that I'm recommending is called *I Jack,* by Patricia Finney. I really loved that book. It is written as if Jack is actually telling the story, and Jack is a dog! There are also cats in the family, who every page or two, add a very sarcastic comment about Jack. I recommend reading this book to anyone who likes comedic adventures!

— Alyssa Mielke

The Secret School, by Avi, is a very good book. It takes place in the small town of Elk Valley, Colorado, in 1925. The one-room schoolhouse has to be closed down because the teacher can't teach anymore. A few students decide to keep the school running in secret so that two other students can take a test and go to college.

— Emma Mielke



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Voices of Protest and Community at Sandisfield Arts Center

On the four Sundays in June, the Sandisfield Arts Center Sunday Morning 2006 Forum Series will focus on the voices of protest in twentieth-century American culture. The programs, which all start at 10:30 a.m., will address the extent and limits of popular willingness to challenge the status quo, defend individual autonomy, and work toward the creation of a different sense of community. Admission is $5.

Change in American society has generally been resisted with considerable energy by those who uphold the status quo. Our presentations will attempt to make sense of a diverse pattern of events and movements that led ultimately to political, economic, social, and cultural change desired by some and detested by others.

A great deal of protest and many protest movements in America were often a response to perceptions of political, economic, and cultural threats to individuals and their sense of community. Social and cultural change, whatever its source — adverse working and living conditions, racial prejudice, gender oppression, sexual preference, religious intolerance, economic inequality, or opposition to American imperialism and war—can be seen as a confrontation between extremes.

The Schedule and the Speakers

• June 4: Rebels, Renegades and Community in America

William Cohn, Visiting Professor of American Studies, Trinity College.

• June 11: Nonviolence for Violent People

Walter Wink, Professor Emeritus at Auburn Theological Seminary, former Peace Fellow at the United States Institute of Peace.

• June 18: Civil Rights

Val Coleman, Sandisfield Arts Center Board Member, lifelong advocate of social justice.

• June 25: Feminism

Audrey Manring, Associate Editor, *The Women's Times*.

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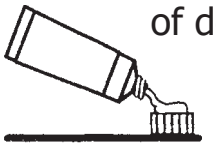

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Route 23 Monterey

Open House May 27 at Roberts Woods Farm

Roberts Woods Farm once again will hold an open house on Saturday, May 27, 2006, from 1:00 to 4:00 p.m. Last year over 125 individuals joined us and our horses in fun and games at 45 Art School Road.

Visitors will be welcome to check out the barns and stable, watch Icelandic horse riding demonstrations, or go for a hayride. Horse rides and horse painting will be available for kids, and refreshments will be available for all!

The demonstrations will take place between 1:30 and 3:00 p.m. in the indoor arena. Accomplished adult and junior riders will highlight the tolt and flying pace, gait patterns unique to the Icelandic horse. The tolt is a smooth, fast running walk that delights both rider and spectator, whereas the flying pace is an all-out effort for the horse as it "flies" at thirty miles an hour.

Roberts Woods Farm is changing its mission this year as it plans to collaborate with a local children's camp to provide equine-oriented activities and to sponsor North American riding for the Handicapped Association clinics, the latter devoted to working with individuals with disabilities. Both the camp and the NARHA activities will contribute to the cognitive, physical, emotional, and social well-being of children and special-needs adolescents and adults.

Kathryn Roberts

Roberts Woods Farm will continue to sponsor its annual visit to Thingeyar Horse Farm in beautiful northern Iceland for rides through the rugged country where these special horses evolved. The farm will also sponsor riding clinics led by Icelandic riding instructors.

Brian Puntin, Roberts Woods Farm manager, will continue to buy, sell, and train Icelandics for his own business, Berkshire Islandics, which he operates at the same address. Roberts Woods Farm is owned by Marc and Kathryn Roberts.

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P.O. Box 9, 01245

Vote People, Not Party

To the Editor:

In six years working as an elected official in Monterey—first as a member of the Planning Board and now on the Select Board—I've come to believe partisanship has no place in small town politics. Communities such as ours rely on the volunteerism of good people regardless of their affiliation, and often there are not enough of them to go around. I'm in favor of contested elections, but they should be in the service of the town and not of its parties.

In the case of the contested seat on the Board of Health, I'm afraid the two may have been confused. Stephen Enoch, a Republican on an all-Republican board, has done an outstanding job, as have both his colleagues. And while I'm sure Morton Sternberg, the Democratic candidate, is ably qualified, it's a shame Mr. Enoch's three years of service—and his desire to continue that service—have been met with anything but thanks and encouragement. I'm partly to blame for this, as I didn't offer his name at the Democratic Caucus in opposition to the slate. My apologies to both Mr. Enoch and Mr. Sternberg.

The town is fortunate to have an abundance of talent and willingness in this contested seat, but I, for one, will be voting for Mr. Enoch—regardless of his affiliation or of the affiliation of his board members—and I hope the loser, whoever it is, will find a way to help us govern in the future.

— Jonathan Sylbert

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Calendar

Every Monday (exc. May 15): Select Board meeting, 8:30 a.m.– noon, Town Offices.

Saturday, May 6: Annual Town Meeting and Town Election, Monterey Firehouse, 9:30 a.m.; election polls open all day.

Wednesday, May 10: Community Potluck Dinner, 6 p.m., Meetinghouse Fellowship Hall. Don Victor, photographer, shows photos of Monterey gatherings from the 70's and 80's. See p. 7.

Thursday, May 11: Free blood pressure clinic, 2 – 3 p.m., Town Offices, administered by Visiting Nurses Assoc.

Saturday, May 13: Community Center Meeting at Town Hall, 10:30 – 11:30 a.m. Input! See p. 8.

Sunday, May 14: Mother's Day.

Monday, May 15: Select Board evening meeting, 7 p.m., Town Hall. Education Committee will meet with Select Board.

Monday, May 22: Monterey Knitting Circle meets at 6 p.m. at the Monterey General Store. All welcome.

Friday, May 26: Community Astronomy Night led by Richard Sanderson, Planetarium Director of Springfield Science Museum, 7 p.m., Monterey Meetinghouse. Free, sponsored by Monterey Cultural Council. See p. 6.

Saturday, May 27:

Open House at Roberts Woods Farm, 1 – 4 p.m. Icelandic horses, demonstrations & games. See p. 22.

Square and contra dancing, 8:30 – 11:30 p.m., Sheffield Grange, Rt. 7, Sheffield. Music by Mountain Laurel. Caller Jim Gregory Smith. All dances are taught; beginners and children are welcome. Adults $6, children $3. Information 528-9385.

Monday, May 29: Memorial Day observed. Service at Memorial Park, 11 a.m., Parade in town center, 1 p.m. See p. 4.

The Observer
March 26 – April 25, 2006

High temp. (4/21)	74°
Low temp. (3/29)	24°
Avg. high temp.	55.9°
Avg. low temp.	31.1°
Avg. temp.	43.5°
Total precipitation (rain and melted snow)	4.06 in.
Snowfall	1.2 in.

Precipitation occurred on 14 days.

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